

1 **Amendment to the Claims**

2 **In the Claims:**

3 Please amend Claims 14 and 25 as follows:

4 1. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling a host player to select one or more other
5 participants to join in playing a multiplayer online electronic game, comprising the steps of:

6 (a) enabling the host player to create a list of contacts comprising one or more
7 other persons who may be interested in participating in playing the multiplayer online electronic
8 game;

9 (b) enabling the host player to select one or more of the other persons from among
10 the list of contacts to participate in playing the multiplayer online electronic game;

11 (c) automatically sending an electronic invitation to each of the one or more other
12 persons selected by the host player, to join in playing the multiplayer online electronic game;

13 (d) enabling each of the one or more other persons who receive the electronic
14 invitation that was automatically sent, to selectively join the multiplayer online electronic game as a
15 participant; and

16 (e) providing an availability status for each person in the list of contacts so as to
17 enable the host player to identify persons in the list of contacts who are currently available for
18 playing the multiplayer online electronic game.

19 2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing an availability
20 status for each person in the list of contacts so as to enable the host player to identify persons in the list
21 of contacts who are currently available to participate in playing the multiplayer online electronic game.

22 3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of enabling
23 each person in the list of contacts to select the availability status indicating the person's availability
24 for participating in playing the multiplayer online electronic game.

25 4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the host player is enabled to build a list of chat
26 contacts through use of an online messaging service, said list of chat contacts automatically being
27 parsed to create the list of contacts.

28 ///

29 ///

30 ///

1 5. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein at least one person in the list of contacts is not
2 currently logged into the online messaging service and has been invited to join the multiplayer online
3 electronic game, further comprising the step of automatically forwarding the electronic invitation to
4 join the multiplayer online electronic game to said at least one person when said at least one person
5 logs into the online messaging service.

6 6. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein selection of game participants and voice chat
7 communications before and during game play is facilitated by a gaming utility that runs on an
8 electronic device operated by each game participant and at least one person in the list of contacts has
9 been invited to join the multiplayer online electronic game and has not started an instance of the
10 gaming utility on the electronic device(s) operated by said at least one person, further comprising the
11 step of automatically forwarding the electronic invitation to join the multiplayer online electronic
12 game to said at least one person when said at least one person launches an instance of the gaming
13 utility on the electronic device(s) operated by said at least one person.

14 7. (Previously Canceled)

15 8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the electronic invitation comprises a verbal
16 message.

17 9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising the step of enabling the electronic
18 invitation to be accepted by a person invited to join the game through a verbal response spoken by
19 said person.

20 10. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of providing a list of
21 multiplayer online electronic games to the host player; and enabling the host player to select the
22 multiplayer online electronic game from said list of multiplayer online electronic games.

23 11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

24 (a) providing a user interface including a first display area on which the list of
25 contacts is displayed and a second display area corresponding to a voice chat session; and

26 (b) enabling the host to select the one or more contacts to invite to join the voice
27 chat session by selecting one or more contacts from among the list of contacts displayed in the first
28 display area and dragging and dropping them onto the second display area.

29 12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein a plurality of contacts can be selected and
30 dragged and dropped onto the second display area at one time.

1 13. (Original) A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for
2 performing the steps recited in Claim 1.

3 14. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling a host player to select one or more other
4 players to participate in a multiplayer online electronic game played using a plurality of electronic
5 devices linked in communication over a communications network, each of said plurality of electronic
6 devices being operated by a different player, the method comprising the steps of:

7 (a) enabling the host player to initiate a chat session;
8 (b) enabling the host player to invite one or more other players to join the chat
9 session;

10 (c) enabling any of the players who were invited by the host, to be a participant in
11 the chat session;

12 (d) enabling the host player to forward a network address corresponding to an
13 electronic device being operated by the host to any other player participating in the chat session;

14 (e) automatically launching an instance of the multiplayer online electronic game
15 on each electronic device being operated by any player participating in the chat session, said step of
16 automatically launching being in response to a game initiating action performed by the host player so
17 that any player participating in the chat session automatically becomes a participant in the
18 multiplayer online electronic game; and

19 (f[e]) enabling each player to transmit voice chat data to all of the other players who
20 have joined the chat session.

21 15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of providing a network
22 address of the electronic device the host player is using and operating so as to enable the host player
23 to invite one or more other players to join in playing the multiplayer online electronic game, by
24 referencing said network address.

25 ///

26 ///

27 ///

28 ///

29 ///

30 ///

1 16. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the host player is a member of an online
2 messaging service that enables the host player to build a player contact list comprising a list of one or
3 more players with whom the host prefers to chat and/or play multiplayer online electronic games,
4 further comprising the steps of:

5 (a) displaying the player contact list to the host player; and

6 (b) enabling the host player to select one or more other players to participate in
7 playing the multiplayer online electronic game from the player contact list.

8 17. (Original) The method of Claim 16, further comprising the step of providing an
9 availability status for each player in the player contact list.

10 18. (Original) The method of Claim 16, further comprising the step of enabling each player
11 to select an availability status indicating the player's availability to join a chat session.

12 19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

13 (a) providing a user interface including a first display area on which the list of
14 contacts is displayed and a second display area corresponding to a voice chat session; and

15 (b) enabling the host to select the one or more contacts to invite to join the voice
16 chat session by selecting one or more contacts from among the list of contacts displayed in the first
17 display area and dragging and dropping them onto the second display area.

18 20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein a plurality of contacts can be selected and
19 dragged and dropped onto the second display area at one time.

20 21. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of sending an electronic
21 invitation to join the chat session to each of the one or more players invited by the host player to join
22 the chat session.

23 22. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein the electronic invitation includes an audible
24 announcement apprising any player receiving the electronic invitation that the host player has invited
25 the player to join the chat session.

26 23. (Original) The method of Claim 22, further comprising the step of enabling the
27 electronic invitation to join the chat session to be accepted by a recipient through a verbal response
28 spoken by the recipient, whereupon said recipient becomes a participant in the chat session.

29 ///

30 ///

1 24. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein each player is a member of an online
2 messaging service that enables the player to build a player contact list comprising a list of one or
3 more players with whom the player prefers to chat and/or play multiplayer online computer games,
4 further comprising the step of:

5 (a) providing a list of chat sessions that are being hosted by at least one other
6 player contact in a player contact list built by the player; and

7 (b) enabling the player to join a chat session appearing in the list of chat sessions.

8 25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of providing
9 a headset operatively coupled in communication with each of said plurality of electronic devices,
10 each headset comprising at least one sound transducer and a microphone employed by each ~~players~~
11 player to participate in a voice chat session.

12 26. (Previously Canceled)

13 27. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the steps of providing a list of
14 multiplayer online electronic games; and enabling the host player to select the multiplayer online
15 electronic game that will be played.

16 28. (Original) A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for
17 performing the steps recited in Claim 14.

18 ///

19 ///

20 ///

21 ///

22 ///

23 ///

24 ///

25 ///

26 ///

27 ///

28 ///

29 ///

30 ///

1 29. (Original) A method for enabling a host player to select one or more other players to
2 participate in a multiplayer online electronic game played using a plurality of electronic devices
3 linked in communication over a communications network, each of said plurality of electronic devices
4 being operated by a different player, the method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) enabling the host player to initiate a voice chat session;
6 (b) enabling the host player to invite one or more other players to join the voice
7 chat session;

8 (c) enabling any of the players who were invited by the host, to be a participant in
9 the voice chat session;

10 (d) enabling the host player to forward a network address corresponding to an
11 electronic device being operated by the host to any other player participating in the voice chat
12 session; and

13 (e) transmitting a voice chat message from the host player to any other player
14 participating in the voice chat session, said voice chat message identifying a multiplayer online
15 electronic game that the host player will be launching or has already launched on the electronic device
16 operated by the host player so that any other player participating in the voice chat session can
17 selectively launch an instance of the multiplayer online electronic game on the electronic device
18 operated by the player, so that any player participating in the chat session who selectively launches the
19 multiplayer online electronic game becomes a participant in the multiplayer online electronic game.

20 30. (Original) The method of Claim 29, wherein the host player is a member of an online
21 messaging service that enables the host player to build a player contact list of one or more players
22 with whom the host prefers to chat and/or play multiplayer online computer games, further
23 comprising the steps of:

24 (a) providing the player contact list to the host player; and

25 (b) enabling the host player to select one or more players to participate in the
26 multiplayer online electronic game from the player contact list.

27 31. (Original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising the step of providing an
28 availability status for each player in the player contact list.

29 32. (Original) A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for
30 performing the steps recited in Claim 29.

1 33. (Previously Presented) A system for enabling a host player to select one or more other
2 players to participate in playing a multiplayer online electronic game played using a plurality of electronic
3 devices linked in communication over a communications network, each of said plurality of electronic
4 devices being operated by a different player and including:

5 (a) a display on which a user interface is implemented;
6 (b) a memory in which a plurality of machine instructions are stored;
7 (c) a microphone operatively coupled to the electronic device and which produces
8 audio signals in response to words spoken by a user into the microphone;

9 (d) a sound transducer operatively coupled to the electronic device so as to
10 replicate sounds corresponding to an audio data signal received over the communications network by
11 the electronic device to which said at least one sound transducer is operatively coupled; and

12 (e) a processor coupled to the memory for executing said plurality of machine
13 instructions, said processor implementing a plurality of functions when executing the machine
14 instructions, including:

15 (i) enabling the host player to initiate a chat session;
16 (ii) enabling the host player to invite one or more other players to join the
17 chat session;

18 (iii) enabling any of the players who were invited by the host, to be a
19 participant in the chat session;

20 (iv) automatically launching an instance of the multiplayer online electronic
21 game on each electronic device being operated by any player participating in the chat session, said
22 step of automatically launching being in response to a game initiating action performed by the host
23 player so that any player participating in the chat session automatically becomes a participant in the
24 multiplayer online electronic game;

25 (v) employing the microphone, the sound transducer, and the electronic
26 device to enable each player to transmit voice chat data to all other players participating in the chat
27 session;

28 (vi) sending an electronic invitation to a player being invited by the host
29 player to join the chat session;

30 ///

1 (vii) producing an audible announcement with said at least one sound
2 transducer apprising a recipient of the electronic invitation that the host player has invited the
3 recipient to join the chat session; and

4 (viii) enabling the electronic invitation to be accepted by the recipient
5 through use of a verbal response spoken into the microphone by the recipient.

6 34. (Original) The system of Claim 33, wherein the host player is a member of an online
7 messaging service that enables the host player to build a player contact list of one or more players
8 with whom the host may desire to play multiplayer online computer games, and wherein execution of
9 the plurality of machine instructions further implements the functions of:

- 10 (a) obtaining the player contact list from the online messaging service;
11 (b) displaying the player contact list to the host player; and
12 (c) enabling the host player to select one or more players to participate in the
13 multiplayer online electronic game from the player contact list.

14 35. (Previously Canceled)

15 36. (Previously Canceled)

16 37. (Previously Canceled)

17 38. (Previously Canceled)